

## NINTH SITTING

Wednesday, 7 December 2005

*The sitting was opened at 10.00 with Mr Goris, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.*

### *1. Attendance register*

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – The names of those substitutes present at this sitting, which have been notified to the President, will be published with the list of representatives appended to the minutes of proceedings.

### *2. Adoption of the minutes*

The PRESIDENT – In accordance with Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure, the minutes of the previous sitting have been distributed.

Are there any comments on the minutes? ...

*The minutes are adopted.*

### *3. Statements by leaders of invited delegations*

The PRESIDENT – The first order of the day is a statement by Mr Nikolai Cherginets, the leader of the invited delegation from Belarus.

Mr Cherginets, I welcome you and your colleagues from Belarus to the Chamber. I have visited your country many times in my capacity as a rapporteur for the Council of Europe. We know that the situation there is not easy, but we are pleased to have you here and to listen to your address.

Mr Cherginets, please come to the tribune.

Mr CHERGINETS (*Leader of the invited delegation from Belarus*) (summary) said that he believed that the sociological, ecological, ideological and legal problems facing the world could not be all resolved at once. The threat of a third world war was not imminent, but a world war could be triggered by, for example, terrorism. Terrorism was caused by a number of factors, including poverty in many countries, the lack of education for the young, nationalism, and romantic idealism which was used by some to destabilise individual countries.

Belarus supported the declaration on terrorism adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, despite its shortcomings. This identified as sources of terrorism: poverty, armed conflict and migration caused by international tension which fuelled the activities of terrorist organisations.

Belarus was at the heart of Europe. It had open borders with Russia. Illegal immigration from Central Asia and Africa was a major concern. Following studies of the reasons for this immigration to Belarus, it appeared that 46% of illegal immigrants wanted to start a new life in a dynamic economy with only 1.3% unemployment, significant growth and social protection; 12% of these illegal immigrants were fleeing criminal charges while the remaining 42% wanted to go to western Europe.

The major problem of illegal immigration should be tackled in the countries of origin, especially for the second and third groups mentioned above, and to do this required international cooperation.

Belarus had signed all the international agreements on terrorism and illegal immigration. Other countries should do this as well.

Belarus had made efforts to integrate itself with the international community. The Belarus Parliament had agreed to the deployment of Belarus forces in international peacekeeping operations. Other countries and international organisations should step up their efforts in this area. In particular, the WEU Assembly should work towards a treaty on collective security.

Illegal immigration was a sensitive subject, and one that was used by some extremist politicians as a pretext for inflammatory speeches, but it was not a simple question of good and evil. All those in the common European house should work together to foster comfort and security.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Cherginets.

I had the opportunity not so long ago to visit Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, together with some of our staff. The Caucasus is of the utmost importance to security and stability in Europe, being at the very frontiers of our continent.

We have with us the former Vice-President of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, Ms Bakhshaliyeva, and this is an opportune moment to give her the floor for five minutes. Azerbaijan recently had an election, and I stress that stability in the Caucasus region is of great importance to stability in Europe.

Ms Bakhshaliyeva, you have the floor.

Ms BAKHSHALIYEVA (*Azerbaijan*) (summary) said that Azerbaijan attached great importance to cooperation with the EU, especially in the security sphere.

Azerbaijan lay between Europe and Asia, between east and west, and was seeking to integrate and modernise. On 14 June this year Azerbaijan had implemented a new neighbourhood policy. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU had been confirmed on 14 September 2004 at the Cooperation Council in Brussels. Azerbaijan was active in Partnership for Peace and supported all efforts to make Partnership for Peace more operational in the context of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership.

Since 11 September 2001, Azerbaijan had contributed to the global fight against terrorism, by offering its airspace and airports in the struggle against the Taliban and al-Qa'ida and through making a contribution to the international forces in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan was also updating its legislation on terrorism and terrorism financing.

Azerbaijan was party to all arms control agreements and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. It had hosted inspection visits under these agreements and was a strong supporter of transparency.

Successful security agreements helped resolve regional conflicts in the former Soviet Union and particularly in the southern Caucasus. The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh, however, sometimes hindered peaceful policies in the area. The continuing conflict was destabilising. Armenian forces occupied 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan. More than 1 million Azeris were refugees. It was important to put an end to this conflict. This was an intolerable situation for both Azeris and Armenians. Armenia should stop ignoring the United Nations Security Council Resolutions passed in 1993, four of which covered the integrity and security of Azerbaijan, and included a call for the unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces and the return of refugees.

The Budapest and Lisbon OSCE Summits in 1994 and 1996 had reiterated the OSCE's support for the Security Council Resolutions. Official documents of the Council of Europe, such as the Atkinson Report, had described it as abnormal for 20% of Azerbaijan to be occupied. The occupation was still continuing. The suffering of any country was detrimental to the world, and there should therefore be joint efforts to solve this problem.

The aims of the separatists were not self-determination but ethnic cleansing. Armenia was the clear aggressor. This was a threat to security in the Caucasus and the world. The territory occupied by Armenia was used for training terrorists and illegal trafficking.

It was of concern that the occupation meant that Azerbaijan could not fulfil its arms control obligations. Large numbers of weapons were circulating in the occupied territories. It was a concern that the Russian leadership had decided to move troops stationed in Georgia to Armenia.

Only through protecting her borders could Azerbaijan effectively guarantee her security and combat international terrorism. Azerbaijan had been targeted by international terrorism, especially from Armenia. This had led to thousands of casualties. It was hoped that reason and negotiations would prevail.

Only once crisis flashpoints had been extinguished could the southern Caucasus be transformed into a region of stability and economic prosperity.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Ms Bakhshaliyeva, for your address. It is clear to all of us that there are still some problems to solve in the South Caucasus. We can only hope that all the parties concerned will put forward peaceful solutions.

#### ***4. The European Union in the Balkans: Althea and other operations; Parliaments and the Althea mission (joint debate)***

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the presentation of the report of the Defence Committee on the European Union in the Balkans: Althea and other operations (Document [1919](#)).

After the Rapporteur has presented the report, we will proceed to the presentation of the report of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations on Parliament and the Althea mission (Document [1911](#)), followed by a joint debate and vote on the draft recommendation contained in Document 1919 and on the draft resolution and draft order contained in Document 1911.

I call the Rapporteur, Mr Mota Amaral, to present the report.

Mr MOTA AMARAL (*Portugal*) (summary) said that the WEU would have to take a position on the Balkans and on the EU operations in this area. The Balkans was a very important region.

The geography of the region had produced very strong and distinct ethnic groups which in turn had led to serious tensions and open conflict during the 1990s even though the end of the cold war had provided a good opportunity for peace and cooperation in Europe. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia was a good example of this. Wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been particularly violent. There had been many appeals made in Europe for the end of the conflict, and the WEU had played a commendable role, especially in the Adriatic Sea. It was the United States, however, which had made possible the final accords, agreed in Dayton, Ohio, and signed in Paris.

A crisis had broken out before the end of the 1990s caused by the policies of Slobodan Milosevic. This had led to refugees fleeing to countries as far away as Portugal.

It had not been easy to obtain the withdrawal of Serbian troops. NATO-backed bombing, with ground support from local militia in order to end the conflict, had been justified on humanitarian grounds.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there had been new uprisings in the Balkans, but the authorities there now seemed to be a model of multi-ethnic cooperation.

The hard lessons from the Balkans had assisted the EU in developing a proper defence and security policy. The WEU had been very important in this process and remained the only European level parliamentary scrutiny organisation.

The report owed much to all involved in the Defence Committee. As it described the Althea operation in detail, there was no need for a verbal repetition.

During a visit to the area, it had been clear that the Althea operation had been successful. EUFOR had taken over from SFOR successfully and lent credibility to the local institutions. The area had also seen a marked improvement in its police force and the authorities of the countries concerned had expressed their gratitude for the assistance received.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina a number of decisions had been taken to prolong the presence of peacekeeping troops, albeit at a reduced level. This was because there remained a number of problems to be solved. There was a need to increase support services for EUFOR, especially by increasing the number of helicopters and improving communications equipment.

Althea and other operations had assisted the Balkans. The security climate in the region had been greatly improved. Balkan countries needed to be involved in the integration process. It was not desirable to have a poor and insecure area on the EU's doorstep.

However, the Balkan countries shared an ideology with the EU. This was why they wanted to join the EU and NATO.

The path ahead was tough and there would be new outbreaks of trouble especially relating to Serbia and Kosovo as the Serbians totally rejected Kosovar independence. A peaceful solution would require great wisdom and would also influence the outcome of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Relations between Montenegro and Serbia would also have to be settled shortly.

Formal commitments on borders and expansion as well as the functioning multicultural societies in the region were important. Human rights and democratic and lawful societies were also important to foster economic development, and to tackle terrorism and unlawful activities. These were requirements for peace.

No one could ignore the difficulties of further European enlargement in the region, especially when the EU economy was facing difficulties and when there were political difficulties between the EU and some member states on a number of issues. However, further integration of the Balkans and the EU should spur the EU to resolve these issues. The people of the Balkans region were characterised by a rich cultural and ethnic diversity.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Mota Amaral.

We come now to the presentation of the report of the Committee for Parliamentary and Public Relations on parliaments and the Althea mission, Document [1911](#).

I call Mr Gülçicek, on behalf of himself and Mr Crema, to present the report.

Mr GÜLÇİCEK (*Turkey*) (Translation) Turkey is a major contributor to this large-scale ESDP operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina being conducted by the EU using NATO assets and capabilities.

In terms of the strength of its contribution, Turkey is in fifth place among the 33 participating countries. This strong commitment highlights the importance Turkey attaches to security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as its support for the ESDP.

Turkey currently contributes 396 soldiers, including 23 gendarmes, to Operation Althea. After the second six-monthly review we will continue to participate in the operation with the same number of soldiers, but with double the number of gendarmerie officers.

Operation Althea fulfils a vital function in this region of the Balkans, which longs for security and stability, while at the same time providing a valuable source of experience for the albeit still young, but nonetheless dynamic ESDP.

The success of Operation Althea also demonstrates the success of the Berlin plus arrangements which constitute the most important tool for cooperation in the operational area between the EU and NATO, and which make a major contribution to security and stability.

Turkey will continue to support Operation Althea.

The WEU Assembly deserves praise on the work it has done on the operation which is so important for the ESDP.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank all those who helped with the drafting of this report.

The PRESIDENT– Thank you, Mr Gülçicek.

I now open the joint debate on the two reports.

I am pleased to welcome the first speaker, who is Mr Czarnecki, a Member of the European Parliament.

Mr CZARNECKI (*Observer from the European Parliament*) – Thank you, Mr President. Colleagues and dear guests, I have the privilege of representing the European Parliament in this very important debate. I shall begin with a personal comment: I was part of the Polish Parliamentary Delegation to this Assembly between 1999 and 2001. Today, I do not feel like a guest, but as one of you.

The problem of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the other south-east European countries is one of the most important challenges for the European Union and the European Parliament. Our special Security and Defence Subcommittee had several serious debates and reports about the matter. We met the Commander-in-chief of the Althea mission and in April a delegation of the Subcommittee and the European Parliament visited the EUFOR military unit in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I was a member of the delegation, and we also visited Sarajevo and Mostar.

We know that the long-term pressure of European structures will bring positive results in the region. Moreover, I believe that other countries from south-east Europe – such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania – will follow Croatia and Macedonia in joining the European Union.

The European Union must be wider and more open, but before those countries join it we must engage in deeper cooperation in matters to do with economics, human rights, politics and military affairs.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to participate in this debate.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you. On behalf of our colleagues, I welcome you back to the Assembly and hope to see you many times in the future.

I call Mr Pangalos.

Mr PANGALOS (*Greece*) – Thank you. The men and women who take part in this operation perform their duties in a most distinguished way, and the fact that there is no apparent violence in the region at present shows that progress is being made. We have attained our objectives in that respect, but the future is becoming more uncertain.

That uncertainty cannot be resolved by executive order from the military or political administration. The dramatic dissolution of the former Yugoslavia was based on a principle that now appears very doubtful, and long discussions have taken place about the fact. We accepted that Yugoslavia's internal borders were international borders: we recognise them, and we recognise the independence of the constituent states of the former Yugoslav federation. However, the corollary of that was that those states would not be further divided. They were unitary, independent and sovereign states, and therefore people in some capitals and political milieux must pause before contemplating the further dissolution of the existing entities.

Given the state of unity in the world today, we must not imagine that any particular policy will bring only positive benefits. Some people dream about separating Kosovo from Serbia, but the process cannot stop there. How could we then refuse the same level of self-determination to the Albanians in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia? What would then keep together Serbs, Muslims and Croats in Bosnia?

I was in Bosnia some months ago. On either side of the Greek entity in that region there are two villages, one Muslim and one Serb. The people of those villages meet in the camp, because they still do not have the ability to meet each other freely and cannot develop neighbourly relations without fear. We have a long way to go and we must face up to our responsibilities.

First, we must adopt what is the only possible solution for the future of former Yugoslavia: that the existing entities should not be further divided, and that none of them should acquire the right to secession. Of course, we cannot occupy one of those entities and force it to remain within a certain framework, so we are obliged to ensure that those entities that encourage a secessionist approach should be omitted from the process of European unification.

For that part of the world, countries that want to take part in European unification must work through the existing national entities and the former components of federal Yugoslavia. If we adopt that position, we can work more effectively to develop social, cultural and economic relations and overcome the last vestiges of war and enmity.

But to do that requires money. When the current presidency of the EU seeks to take money away from Latvia and Lithuania to give it to the United Kingdom, how, in the face of such self-interest, can the EU develop credible actions in the rest of Europe? We are in crisis and I fear that that crisis might appear

in this part of the world. Problems exist, but our attitudes and actions make problems. We can find an easy solution, or a more difficult solution, or just not find a solution at all.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Rados.

Mr RADOS (*Croatia*) – Thank you, Mr President. Members of the Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, let me first thank and congratulate the Rapporteur, Mr Mota Amaral, on an excellent and very important report. Its importance derives from the process tackled within it. The engagement of the EU in the Balkans is of vital importance to the Balkans and the EU.

The benefits for the respective Balkan countries are self-evident. The EU will help them to build stable and modern states, to abandon historical problems of under-development, poverty and conflicts and, finally, to become full members of the European family.

There are at least two benefits for the EU. One is that it will gain new power with new countries, eliminating instability on its borders at the same time. The second benefit could be, and I hope will be, more important because it includes perspectives of global development and the role of the EU in that. EU involvement in the Balkans can help it to find its strategic position, not only on the continent but in the world.

It is clear that security is vital for political and economic power, as it always was. In the global world, security challenges and security ability are global too. The lessons of the Balkans can help the EU define its new global security role and, through a more profiled and homogenous foreign and security policy, overcome its present problems with integration, as suggested already during this session of the Assembly.

At the same time, the EU can be an active player in bringing peace and stability to south Asia, from the near and middle east to the far east, an area that some analysts call the global Balkans. Without such an active role, not only European security but even European economic prosperity and further integration will be called into question.

Croatia is a central European, Mediterranean and Balkan country. As a member of different regional initiatives and as an official EU candidate, having started accession negotiations, Croatia has played a very positive role in achieving not only political stability but real democracy and economic welfare in the region. With Romania, Bulgaria and, very soon, Croatia in the EU, it will be easier to integrate the whole of the Balkans into European society. Thank you for your attention.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Spiric.

Mr SPIRIC (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*) (Translation) – I have no intention of giving some sort of brief overview of the history or of the situation concerning the Althea mission. I would just like to highlight a few particular points, from the point of view of the parliamentarians from Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, I want to stress that we fully support the recommendations in Documents [1911](#) and [1919](#).

It is with pleasure that I can inform you, that now, 10 years after the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords, Bosnia and Herzegovina is making enormous efforts to become a country that contributes to the resolution of the global problems that the contemporary world is faced with, not a country generating them. This would not have been possible to achieve within that period of time without the unequivocal and steadfast support of SFOR and its successor, the Althea mission. The clarity of the US strategy, which was mainly in harmony with EU policy in this regard, gave vital force to this project. For example, during those missions, there occurred not a single grave incident or act of enmity against SFOR and EUFOR.

Because we are aware of this, we would like to express our gratitude to those states that contributed to the Althea mission. It is our obligation to make the general public in Bosnia and Herzegovina more conscious of this, and to heighten the sense of our common international responsibility.

The success story of the international missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina is illustrated by the fact that from an initial 240 000 soldiers in 1996, the international military presence has been scaled down to 6 500 EUFOR members in 2005. The EUFOR mission has universally been acknowledged as successful, and is indeed genuinely translating the slogan “From Stabilisation toward Integration” into practice.

Althea is already being quoted as a successful example of the implementation of a comprehensive, coherent and clear-cut approach by the EU.

It was also thanks to the assistance and support of these missions that we were able to achieve significant results in the security and defence reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have adopted the fundamental pieces of legislation pertaining to defence and army service, and to the reform of police, which marked the opening of the negotiations on the Stabilisation and Association process with the EU.

I would like to underscore here that the public in Bosnia and Herzegovina is increasingly expecting, through EUFOR, to take upon itself the education and training role, in terms of the implementation of standards, that would enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to become, as soon as possible, a fully-fledged member of the Partnership for Peace, and ultimately of the NATO family.

The Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina also must take on their own share of responsibility for these projects.

All the political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina give their undivided and unreserved support to integration with Euro-Atlantic structures. My country's journey towards the European Union must be accompanied by economic development, and all its citizens must have the feeling that the dedication and self-denial that await them on this voyage are really worth the effort. That is why I urge all of us together to be mindful of the fact that the reform of the economic sector must proceed concurrently with, and on the same plane as the security sector reforms. I would therefore be very happy, and I assume that you would be likewise, if in future we could devote at least the same amount of attention to the development of economy as to the development of security structures.

I am convinced that the building of an economically sustainable system in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be the best guarantee for the sustainability of both internal and global security. To my mind, if we were able send an encouraging message to the foreign investors, it would be the best support to all the missions and projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thank you for your attention.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Spiric. I had occasion recently to visit your country and your capital Sarajevo, which has been undergoing huge improvements and has become an attractive modern European city. I wish you and your country all the very best.

I call Ms Petrescu.

Ms PETRESCU (*Romania*) (summary) said that it was true that for some years there had been conflicts in the Balkans and a high degree of instability. Romania was a major factor for stability and peace in the Balkans, was involved in the Althea mission and was a member of NATO. But Romania would be able to play a more significant role in the region once it was a member of the EU. The importance of ensuring Romanian accession to the EU on 1 January 2006 was therefore great. Romania's influence would increase considerably and Romania would be able to build on historically good relations with neighbours in the Balkans.

The PRESIDENT – The next speaker is Mr Mercan from Turkey.

Mr MERCAN (*Turkey*) – I would like to congratulate both Rapporteurs on the excellent report on the European contribution to regional conflicts in the Balkan area. I am sure that European Security and Defence Policy will be involved in solving or stabilising the regional problems and in the fight against terrorism, national disasters and so forth.

My country has always been a very constructive contributor to the main cause of internationally agreed strategies and defence issues. As stated by my colleague Mr Gülçicek, the Turkish armed forces have contributed a great deal not only to SFOR, but to Afghanistan and, more lately, to Operation Althea. Turkey became the fifth largest contributor in the mission.

As has been stated, and as I believe wholeheartedly, we should continue to discuss in this arena matters that relate to defence and particularly how each country can contribute to peace and security in the international arena. That is how we can create a common European goal in that respect.

Unfortunately, a colleague in the Assembly here yesterday from the Greek-Cypriot community brought up an issue that has very little, if any, relevance to WEU. He brought up the issue of Turkey's

membership of the European Union. I do not believe that this is the European Parliament in which we can debate Turkish membership of the EU or how Greek Cypriots block Turkish membership. If we have to discuss that let us discuss it, but is this the right place to discuss those matters? I think not.

In my speech on the first day, I stated that Turkey and Norway had been blocked by a European Union member state from active participation in the European Defence Agency. I stated that for a fact because it is a fact, not because we are content about it. Turkey may continue to be blocked from becoming a member of the EDA, but Turkey will not lose anything from that. Turkey is an active participant in, and one of the major forces within, NATO and will continue to be so. Turkish taxpayers will continue to spend money on defence. Turkish families, mothers and fathers, will voluntarily send their youth to join the army. All we ask is whether my country should be an active participant in European defence. Europe needs that more than Turkey. Let me say that again: European defence needs Turkey more than Turkey needs European defence. Turkey is an active NATO member and is very active in striving for world peace.

If my colleague thinks that the right path is for the Greek Cypriots to block Turkey from becoming part of the European Defence Agency, let it be so. If he thinks otherwise, let it be so. As I have already said, this is not the place for discussions about Turkey's membership of the European Union.

For the record, not necessarily in response to my colleague, let me say once again that Turkey is very constructive and will continue to be constructive in solving various problems. Turkey will also be constructive in solving the Cyprus problem. We achieve and we abide by United Nations resolutions and we will continue to play a constructive role there. Thank you very much and I am sorry for bothering the Assembly on that one minor issue.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Mercan. I believe that it is not a small or minor issue but we are now, of course, discussing the Althea mission. We nevertheless noted your statement. I now give the floor to our colleague from Cyprus, Mr Clerides. We hope to hear his comments on the Althea mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr CLERIDES (*Cyprus*) – I want to make a point for the record – it is not the Greek Cypriot community, but the Republic of Cyprus, a full member of the European Union, that highlights the problem that the EU has called upon Turkey in the negotiation framework of 3 October to recognise the Republic of Cyprus. There is no other way, I am afraid. Turkey has to do it. It is also worth reminding my colleague from Turkey that even yesterday Turkey blocked the participation of the Republic of Cyprus in the Open Skies Treaty. That once again is against the negotiation framework that was agreed between the European Council and Turkey. Turkey must extend the Ankara Protocol to all 25 members – not 24 – and allow Cyprus's flag to fly on Cypriot planes and in Turkish parts.

That may be outside the context of this debate. I am sorry, but I did not raise the issue. It was raised on the first day by my colleague the Turkish parliamentarian.

I hope that my intervention will put an end to this discussion. Turkey simply has to abide by the European Council decision of 3 October.

Turning to the main debate, I agree with my colleague Mr Pangalos that the European presence in the Balkans is strong – and rightly so, because after all this is a very volatile area and has been the source of trouble throughout Europe's history. Europe and the European Union have a duty to ensure peace, stability and respect for human rights and the rule of law in general in the area.

To the average European citizen, I am afraid that the American political influence and presence in the area seems very strong. My friend Mr Pangalos spoke of the risk of further splitting the states of the former Yugoslavia and that is a real risk because it is the policy being pursued by the present United States Administration. United States officials have made statements supporting the idea of an independent Kosovo. That may not be feasible, because Kosovo is under the administration of the Security Council and it would require the support of all its member states, but that is the reality of the policy being pursued.

If you look at the main strategic publications of American and sometimes British origin, you will see reference being made to the addition of two new member states to the United Nations in the next few years, so that its membership will increase from 191 to 193. That refers to Montenegro and Kosovo.

People are writing about and advocating these things. As Europeans, we must take full responsibility for formulating a preventive European policy.

There is also the great risk of Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, if the EU is not adamant about the maintenance of existing borders, splitting into three territories: Muslim, Serb and Croat. Operation Althea is important to prevent that development but unless the EU, through its technical, economic and financial aid and help in respect of law and order, manages to stick the country together, there is still a great danger, if Montenegro and Kosovo are heading towards independence, of Bosnia and Herzegovina following suit.

Then there is the problem of the Greater Albania advocated by some nationalist groups in Albania itself. That is a real problem that the EU cannot ignore. It must act to ensure that if Albania has European aspirations, Albania must abide by European principles and rules and have respect for human rights and international law.

Peace and stability in the Balkans is still loose and, as Europeans, we must strengthen as much as possible Operation Althea and the presence of European forces in the area.

I support the draft resolution inviting national parliaments to participate more eagerly in national debates on the Balkans.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Arlovic.

Mr ARLOVIC (*Croatia*) (summary) said that the report was excellent and provided a very good picture of the situation in the Balkans. The Althea mission was also to be praised for its role in implementing the preconditions for peace in the area.

Following the Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina still had very little chance of acceding to the EU as it was both a confederation and a federation. Withdrawal of international forces should not be considered as they remained necessary to guarantee the freedom of the population. They should remain until Bosnia and Herzegovina really was a multi-ethnic state.

Croatia would support a referendum in Montenegro and would respect the result. It was understood that the Serbians intended to do likewise.

It was necessary for the problems of Kosovo to be solved between the interested parties. However, it must be understood that a solution that would generate further flash points in the future would not be permitted. Democracy, economic and social development, rapid accession of countries to the EU and respect for human rights were very important and would help to avoid future flash points. It was necessary to develop a system for facilitating discussion between all parties of any future problems, and it was possible that WEU could do this.

The PRESIDENT – The debate is closed, even though some others wished to speak, because time is running out. We must carry on with our business, but I congratulate on my own behalf both rapporteurs, particularly Mr Mota Amaral, whom I had the privilege to accompany during his visit to the Balkans.

I should like to make one small personal comment. It was my impression when we met the Commander of EUFOR that we should try to convince our national governments to invest more in what he called tactical airlift. It was one of his first assessments as he was leading such a high-level EU-led operation for the first time. It very quickly became clear that the first gap in capabilities was in tactical airlift, not strike capability or transport helicopters. I wanted to make that small comment in the hope that we might pass it on to our own defence ministers when we return to our national parliaments.

I give the floor to Mr Mota Amaral to reply to the debate.

Mr MOTA AMARAL (*Portugal*) – Thank you, Mr President, and thanks to all colleagues who contributed to the debate. In general, my proposals were supported by the speakers. There have been some problems, which I consider in my report, and the most serious is getting differently identified peoples to live together in harmony in the Balkans. Multi-ethnic, multicultural societies should be created there.

That challenge, in fact, faces all the older European countries, where large communities from very different ethnic backgrounds and cultures live. I hope that the peoples of the Balkans will succeed in their endeavours. I do not dare guess the future of the different national entities, but my impression, gained

from the dialogue that the President and I engaged in in the Balkans, is that it is assumed by foreign representatives on the spot that Kosovo is going through an irreversible process of independence. That is not only because of United States pressure in the area. I heard the same statement made by many Europeans during my visit to the Balkans and my stay in Sarajevo. In that dialogue, I asked people precisely how they could be so positive about the independence of Kosovo and so positive, too, in denying independence to other parts of the Balkans. That surprised me, and there is no very clear answer to that question.

As I emphasised in my speech, it is necessary to establish some guidelines on the accession of the Balkan countries to the European Union and NATO. I suggested some of those guidelines in my speech in respect of frontiers and in respect of any dreams – they would be nightmares for others – of a Greater Albania, a Greater Serbia or a Greater Macedonia. There must be acceptance of human rights and the rule of law and of the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights. It would be very dangerous to take a case-by-case approach, given the different identities of the peoples of the Balkans. But that is what is happening now, and there is a role and responsibility for every country not yet working within the framework of European policy. Balkanisation is a dangerous word, and one that we should not applaud. The European Union is, I fear, paying for mistakes made some years ago as regards the consequences of the end of the cold war. Our task is to face the future and provide solutions for that future.

The Committee's recommendations open some roads on which I hope there will be success. I give my personal support to the report presented by our colleague Mr Gülçicek on the concerns of national parliaments about the presence of military forces in other countries in Europe.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Mota Amaral.

Does the newly elected Chairman of the Defence Committee wish to speak?

I call Mr Walter.

Mr WALTER (*United Kingdom*) – I congratulate Mr Mota Amaral on his excellent report, which he has produced with great competence, and which, on behalf of the Committee, I thoroughly recommend.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Walter.

Does the Rapporteur, Mr Gülçicek, wish to speak?

Does the Chairman of the Committee, Mr Budin, wish to speak?

That is not the case.

The Defence Committee has presented a draft recommendation in Document [1919](#), to which no amendments have been tabled.

We will now proceed to vote on the draft recommendation contained in Document 1919.

Under Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure, if five or more representatives or substitutes present in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll-call on a draft recommendation.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll-call? ...

That is not the case. We shall vote by show of hands.

*(A vote was taken by show of hands)*

*The draft recommendation is adopted.*

The PRESIDENT – The Committee on Parliamentary and Public Relations has presented a draft resolution and a draft order in Document [1911](#), to which no amendments have been tabled.

We will now proceed to vote on the draft resolution contained in Document 1911.

Under Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure, if 10 or more representatives or substitutes present in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll-call on a draft resolution.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll-call? ...

That is not the case. We shall vote by show of hands.

*(A vote was taken by show of hands)*

*The draft resolution is adopted.*

We shall now vote on the draft order contained in Document [1911](#).

Under Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure, if 10 or more representatives or substitutes present in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll-call on a draft order.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll-call? ...

That is not the case. We shall vote by show of hands.

*(A vote was taken by show of hands)*

*The draft order is adopted.*

I thank the Assembly for its unanimous acceptance of these reports. I am very pleased to have achieved that, and wish to thank our rapporteurs once more.

**5. Address by the Right Honourable Jack Straw MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Chairman in Office of WEU, representing the United Kingdom WEU/EU Presidency**

The PRESIDENT – The next order of the day is the address by the Chairman-in-Office of the Council, United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr Jack Straw. Unfortunately, as I mentioned on Monday, Mr Straw is at present trying to sort out the EU budget and so this address will be delivered by Sir John Holmes, the British Ambassador in Paris.

Ambassador, thank you for coming to address the WEU Assembly today. The United Kingdom has had a very active six months holding the EU and WEU dual Presidency and I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the Assembly.

It does not end here, however, as the United Kingdom will continue to hold the WEU Presidency for a further six months and I am sure it will be both constructive and successful. Our Assembly will be holding a major gathering in London in April at the invitation of the United Kingdom delegation.

At our meeting with the Political and Security Committee in Brussels in September, Ambassador Julian King, representing the United Kingdom Presidency, urged the EU to develop its African policy and increase support for, and cooperation with, the African Union, a matter to which the Assembly is paying particular attention at the present session. I should also like to extend a welcome to colleagues from the African continent.

In October, the Enlarged Presidential Committee met in London with officials from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence as well as with members of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and European Scrutiny Select Committees of the House of Commons. We discussed a number of important global security matters in those meetings. We also had the pleasure of meeting the new members of the very active United Kingdom delegation to the Assembly, led by Tony Lloyd.

Ambassador, we are very interested in what you have to say today!

Sir John HOLMES (*Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, Paris*) – Mr President, distinguished Members of the Assembly, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. Once again, I am delighted to have the opportunity to address the Assembly on behalf of the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw. The Foreign Secretary had very much hoped to be here himself, but unfortunately the demands of the EU Presidency in the run-up to a crucial European Council next week mean that he simply cannot be with you today. As the President also mentioned, he is chairing the conclave of European Foreign Ministers having a first look at our European budget proposals. Given some of the initial reactions to those proposals, I have a strong suspicion that, in practice, he would rather be here.

When I spoke to the Assembly in June, on the eve of the United Kingdom Presidency, I gave you a long list of our objectives for the European Security and Defence Policy for the next six months. It was an ambitious list, but I believe that we have made excellent progress against it. We want to see a more active, more capable and more coherent ESDP, with the EU cooperating effectively with its key international partners.

Development in the past six months, building on the work of previous presidencies, have set us well on the road to achieving that. We have met many of our goals and in other areas have provided a firm basis for Austria and subsequent presidencies to take work forward.

Under the theme of a more active ESDP, the EU now has over a dozen missions ongoing or about to be launched, seven of which have been launched or prepared under the current United Kingdom Presidency. We have also widened both the geographical reach of the ESDP and the type of mission that it can undertake. We are now proving on the ground that the EU is uniquely well placed to provide assistance in situations across the conflict cycle, from peacekeeping to border monitoring and assistance, to security sector reform.

Our longest-running missions – the policing missions EUPM in Bosnia, and Proxima in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – are still continuing, monitoring, mentoring and advising indigenous police forces. Proxima will draw to a close next week with a small advisory team staying on to ensure a smooth handover to the European Commission and its follow-on activities. In Bosnia, Javier Solana's recent report on Althea's second six months serves as a good basis on which to build the mission's future success. The report highlights the need for increased cooperation between the EU's military and civilian elements on the ground, particularly to support the Bosnian authorities in police reform and the fight against organised crime. I know that work on this will be a priority for the succeeding Austrian Presidency.

For the United Kingdom, Africa has been a priority throughout 2005 and we therefore welcome the continuing success of the two ESDP missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Launched in April, EUPOL Kinshasa is supervising, monitoring and advising the integrated police unit in Kinshasa, which was trained in a European Commission training programme and equipped by EU member states. The EUSEC mission, meanwhile, is supporting security sector reform in the country, with a special focus on the reintegration of former armed forces, and is indeed the first ESDP mission of its kind. The EU has recently agreed to launch a new project within EUSEC to assist in reforming the chain of payments to Congolese soldiers and preventing fraud. Also in Africa, in July, the EU reinforced its support for the African Union in Darfur in Sudan, with the aim of strengthening the AMIS mission's policing chain of command and providing observers, planning support and air transport to its military element.

Even further afield, the EU launched its first mission in Asia – the Aceh monitoring mission – in September, at the invitation of the Indonesian Government. It is worth pointing that this mission was set up in 16 days, which underlines the speed of ESDP decision making. The EU is working in partnership with Norway and Switzerland and five ASEAN countries – Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand – to monitor the peace agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement. It is focusing on monitoring demobilisation, reintegration and decommissioning; the relocation of non-native forces and human rights in respect of those tasks, and legislation change. The mission is going well so far, and is a real achievement for the EU, contributing to forging a lasting peace in a region that has been in conflict for so long.

The EU is also now active on the ground in several parts of the Middle East. On 1 July, 2005, at the invitation of the Iraqi Government, the EU launched the operational phase of the integrated rule of law mission for Iraq, EUJUST LEX. The objective of EUJUST LEX is to address urgent needs in the Iraqi criminal justice system by providing training for senior officials in management and criminal investigation. The mission has established a liaison office in Baghdad to ensure close coordination with Iraqi counterparts, EU member states and the international community.

Most recently, the EU has agreed to launch two missions in the Palestinian Territories. To follow up the EU Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support, a new police support mission, EUPOL COPPS, is scheduled to begin on 1 January 2006. It will contribute to the establishment of sustainable and effective policing arrangements – crucially, under Palestinian ownership. It will be in accordance with the

best international standards and be closely coordinated with other international efforts in the wider context of security sector reform. Secondly, and most interestingly, on 25 November, the EU established a border assistance mission at the Rafah crossing point on the Gaza-Egypt border. Once again, this mission was set up quickly, in this case within a month.

Let us stop for a moment and consider the importance of this mission. Opening the border was an event of enormous political significance, and the EU was the organisation of choice for border monitoring for the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt. The EU was able to respond quickly and appropriately to the request from the parties and is providing an essential third-party presence in order to contribute to the opening of the Rafah border and to the building of confidence between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Yet another border assistance mission, this time for Moldova and Ukraine, was also launched just last week. It aims to support the fight against weapons smuggling, and organised crime and corruption and, hopefully, to contribute to progress on the issue of Transdniestria. The mission will be accompanied by a reinforcement of the EU Special Representative's office to ensure a political overview of developments on border issues.

In Georgia, the rule of law mission EU JUST Themis ended in July, having successfully completed its mandate. The EU Special Representative's office there has been reinforced subsequently to ensure that support for implementation of the criminal justice reform action plan continues. The office has also been strengthened with an element to provide advice and mentoring to the Georgian border guard.

You can see then, ladies and gentlemen, from this rapid world tour, that under the United Kingdom Presidency we have demonstrated that the EU can respond quickly, meet high political expectations and manage the risks associated with more complex security environments.

I believe that the missions that I have mentioned here, particularly those in Rafah and Aceh, show how far we have come with the ESDP, not only in the type of mission that we can run and the speed with which we set them up, but also because the EU is now considered increasingly by the broader international community as a key organisation for supporting efforts to improve peace and security around the world.

In order to ensure that the EU can continue to launch and sustain such a variety of challenging missions, we must continue to develop our capabilities. Capability improvement is not just about spending more money, but about spending it more efficiently. European nations can make significant improvements by focusing on developing armed forces and civilian capabilities that are more readily deployable, flexible and sustainable.

Work towards those qualitative improvements in capabilities is taking place within the framework of the Headline Goal 2010. United Kingdom Presidency work on this agenda culminated in EU defence ministers approving the final requirements catalogue of military assets needed for the missions that the EU wants to undertake. The catalogue emphasises the need for rapidly deployable, highly interoperable armed forces. We have also developed a Headline Goal questionnaire, adapted from NATO planning software, through which member states will offer contributions against the requirement during the Austrian Presidency. That process will also identify capability shortfalls that remain to be met, including ones that are already well known to us, such as strategic airlift, air-to-air refuelling assets, command and control arrangements and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Key to making improvements in those areas will be the work of the European Defence Agency. Under the United Kingdom Presidency, the agency has continued work on its four flagship projects and we are particularly pleased with progress made on the European defence equipment market. On 21 November, ministers agreed a voluntary code of conduct on defence procurement for those procurements currently exempt from EU competition law on national security grounds. The code will politically commit subscribing member states to open up the majority of their defence equipment procurements to EU-wide competition. We hope that this will address concerns that the European defence industry lacks the competitiveness to deliver European defence capability requirements cost-effectively.

The United Kingdom Presidency has also taken forward work on the battlegroups initiatives, and 19 battlegroups, involving 26 European nations, have now been committed. The ambition for the full

operational capability period from 2007 is to have two battlegroups available at very high readiness at any one time. The recent commitments from Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus mean that this ambition will now be met. This is a considerable achievement for all member states.

In parallel with that work on military capabilities, the United Kingdom Presidency has also taken forward work on civilian capabilities within the framework of the Civilian Headline Goal 2008. As you have already heard, a number of EU civilian missions has recently been either launched or agreed and it is clear that the role of EU civilian crisis management in international efforts to support peace and stability is growing. The development and focusing of civilian crisis management capabilities is key to sustaining this activity. During the United Kingdom Presidency, good progress has been made in identifying capability shortfalls in all the priority areas: police, rule of law, civilian administration, civil protection, monitoring and support to the EU Special Representatives. The rapid reaction capacity of civilian ESDP has also been improved by the agreement on a concept for civilian response teams and a strategy for the rapid deployment of police.

As we continue to build this range of civilian and military capabilities, we will ensure that the EU remains uniquely positioned to be able to respond quickly and effectively to crises anywhere in the world. This is where the EU can add real value to the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and it is precisely and increasingly what is required in today's crises. But to achieve this, coherence and complementarity between all the civilian and military tools is vital.

The United Kingdom Presidency therefore launched, with Austria and Finland, a tri-presidency approach to improving EU civil-military coordination. Work has already been completed on a concept for comprehensive planning for EU crisis management. The concept provides a method for bringing the EU's instruments together in a single planning framework for any particular crisis response. This will ensure synergy from the outset and an understanding of the links between the various actors. EU ministers have agreed that the concept should be put into practice in reviewing EU activity in Bosnia, Congo, Darfur, Aceh and elsewhere. The United Kingdom also launched a concept for security sector reform that will aim to underpin work that the EU is undertaking in, for example, DRC, to help improve security institutions so that the EU can bring together military, police, judicial and economic expertise with access to finances.

As well as internal coherence, the EU also needs to coordinate closely with other international organisations, notably NATO and the United Nations. The EU and NATO have cooperated closely on the ground in Bosnia and Darfur, and also on capability development. The EU and NATO have also worked closely together in response to natural disasters, including hurricane Katrina and the south Asia earthquake. In response to Katrina, coordination between EU and NATO liaison officers on the ground resulted in the effective channelling of assistance from the European consolidation point at Ramstein airforce base in Germany, via the NATO airbridge to the United States. In response to the south Asian earthquake, many of the supplies channelled through the NATO airbridge came via the EU's Monitoring and Information Centre. Good EU/UN/NATO information exchange on the ground in Pakistan has allowed these relief supplies to be effectively targeted.

In respect of institutional cooperation, we welcome agreement in both organisations of the terms of reference for the liaison teams between the EU military staff and NATO, which will now be set up. Those teams will contribute to full transparency between the organisations, embodying their strategic partnership in the future in crisis management.

Increasing activity in Africa means that the EU also needs to forge strong, close and supportive partnerships with the African Union and African sub-regional organisations. We are doing that by helping those organisations to build their own crisis management capacities. The key principles underlying that work must be to build and support African ownership and respond to African needs, and to coordinate with the work of other international organisations, especially the United Nations and G8. We must also ensure that ESDP actions are coherent with the wider EU strategy for Africa to be launched at the European Council next week.

All in all, I hope that you will agree that the United Kingdom Presidency has done what we said we would – make ESDP more capable, more coherent and operationally more active. It is only through action that member states can build their own competence and that of the international community in ESDP's effectiveness.

Scrutiny of European defence and security issues by national parliaments is essential. The WEU Parliamentary Assembly remains a unique forum that facilitates interparliamentary dialogue and discussion of the issues, as noted in the reports to this Assembly session. The Assembly is inclusive and reaches beyond the boundaries of the EU, genuinely enriching pan-European debate on security and defence. It continues to offer a valuable contribution and, through national parliamentarians, an important link between EU citizens and governments in security and defence – vital issues that our citizens care deeply about.

Thank you for your attention, and thank you for your understanding that a British minister simply could not be here with you in person today.

The PRESIDENT – Mr Ambassador, I first want to thank you for addressing our Assembly today, but most especially I want to thank you for the contents of your address, which I consider to be a full and detailed statement on all aspects of ESDP. The speech featured the very ambitious programme from the United Kingdom Presidency and I noted the reference to the 19 battlegroups, two of which are at high-readiness level. The speech also stressed the importance of enhancing civilian capabilities, such as policy missions. I personally witnessed policy missions in Skopje and in Sarajevo. We know that the Ukrainian authorities are very much looking forward, with us, to the new border policy mission between Ukrainian and Transdnestrian borders. Europe expects a lot from those civilian capabilities.

I want to thank the Ambassador once again for his very kind words to the Assembly. It was good to hear from the United Kingdom Presidency that it considers our Assembly to be very inclusive and to be the right forum to discuss matters at the interparliamentary level.

Unfortunately, Mr Straw was not able to be with us in person today, but we very much hope that we will have the pleasure of receiving him personally here in June next year at the end of the WEU Presidency. We hope that, by that time, he will no longer have the EU burden that he faces today.

Thank you very much, Ambassador.

*(Mr Masseret, Vice-President of the Assembly, took the Chair)*

#### ***6. Cooperation in the operational area between the EU and NATO – reply to the annual report of the Council***

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – The next order of the day is the presentation of the report of the Defence Committee on cooperation in the operational area between the EU and NATO – reply to the annual report of the Council (Document [1918](#)).

I call the Rapporteur, Mr Kucheida, to present the report

Mr KUCHEIDA (*France*) (summary) noted that the report had been adopted by the Committee with only one abstention. Following the failure of the European Defence Community, WEU had carried the flame for 50 years, before handing over to the EU. The EU's strategic interest had been codified by the European Council of 12 December 2003. Europe had been characterised by conflicts and socio-economic problems, but the defence of Europe seemed to have escaped these. The defence of Europe had an EU side and a transatlantic side, which was embodied by NATO. In order to have successful crisis management, it was essential to have effective relations between the two sides.

Negotiations between the EU and NATO had begun in 2000 and ended with “Berlin plus” in 2003. These arrangements for crisis management cooperation had led to the transfer of responsibility for peacekeeping in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. “Berlin plus” was designed to avoid duplication through guaranteed access for the EU to NATO planning, an assumption of the availability of NATO assets, a strengthened role for Deputy SACEUR and access to NATO planning staff to ensure availability of forces to the EU. Operation Concordia had begun in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in March 2003 and in December 2004 Operation Althea had taken over the NATO Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This facilitated the progress of EU integration.

But conflicts of interests and rivalry persisted. The EU was a political and economic project, with some of the characteristics of a state; NATO was purely an effective military presence. Rivalry between the United States and the EU was sometimes reflected in rivalry between the EU and NATO, but both sides should come together. The EU had a number of advantages such as its Africa Policy and the role it played in liaison between the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.

Effective cooperation was only possible if there were close political links between NATO and the EU which required genuine equality, partnership and mutual respect.

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Thank you, Mr Kucheida.

I call Mr Tekelioglu.

Mr TEKELIOGLU (*Turkey*) – I know that this is not the European Parliament, but the earlier remarks of Mr Clerides did not reflect events clearly. Turkey will not recognise Cyprus unless there is a solution based on the Annan or similar plan. That point is repeated several times in documents resulting from discussions with the European Commission. Resolution of this problem depends on ending the isolation still applied to the Turkish side of the island.

I welcome Mr Kucheida's report, which gives a comprehensive review of the relationship between NATO and the EU. I agree with the thrust of the report, which underlines the fact that the two organisations have no choice but to cooperate in a relationship governed by the principles of the strategic partnership and the Berlin plus arrangements.

The two organisations need to cooperate and complement each other and Turkey, both as a NATO ally and as an EU accession country, strongly believes in the virtue of this relationship.

The Berlin plus arrangements proved a successful instrument for NATO-EU cooperation, as is shown by the Althea mission, which is being carried out by the EU with access to NATO assets and capabilities. In the second six-monthly review that was recently submitted by the operation commander, both the operation commander and the force commander praised the successful relationship between the two organisations and emphasised how well the Berlin plus arrangements had functioned.

The non-participation of two EU member states in NATO-EU strategic cooperation is a direct result of the existing framework of cooperation as agreed between the two organisations and cannot be attributed to a refusal on the part of any given country.

Indeed, Turkey's sincere intention to support and encourage further cooperation between NATO and the EU has been clearly demonstrated several times this year. To give but a few examples, Turkey responded positively to the proposal made by the NATO Secretary-General in Vilnius during the informal NATO foreign affairs ministers' meeting in April 2005, which suggested informal gatherings of all NATO and EU foreign ministers twice a year.

Turkey also agreed to an informal exchange of views on the situation in Darfur with the participation of all NATO and EU member states following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council and the Political and Security Committee on 27 June 2005. Given Turkey's long-standing support of ESDP, including its ongoing contributions to EU military and civilian crisis response operations, it seems unfair to call Turkey a country that hinders this cooperation.

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – I call Mr Clerides.

Mr CLERIDES (*Cyprus*) – I congratulate the Rapporteur on his excellent report, which gives a succinct, bird's-eye view of the existing relationship between NATO and the EU and of the future prospects for it. I agree with his comment that the relationship much depends on the political will shown by the two blocs.

Of course, the EU has different aims from NATO. One is a military alliance, while the other is a political, economic and social alliance. Nevertheless, in the complicated world in which we live, the two are not, and cannot be, completely unrelated.

Political cooperation needs a rethink on the part of the United States of its policy of unilateralism in solving international problems and crises. The EU must be involved in tackling international problems

and the sooner our American friends realise that, the better – and the better for the future of our planet. After all, we all live in the same world, although sometimes one gets the impression that we actually live in two worlds: one in the west, which is the United States, and the rest in the east.

To work towards a more unified world and a more unified policy, it is imperative that the EU gets its common foreign policy off the ground. If Europe speaks with one voice, it will be taken seriously by our American friends. But if we speak in 25 different languages – and sometimes within the same country there can be more languages, depending on the government and opposition in each country – we obviously weaken ourselves and strengthen the unilateralism of the United States.

The same applies when it comes to getting ESDP right. If the European Union is unable to have a strong and coherent security and defence policy, it will not be taken seriously as the third pole in a multipolar world dominated by Asia, the United States and Europe. The report is excellent and is a step in the right direction towards understanding the problem.

I must, unfortunately, conclude by commenting on the remarks made by my Turkish colleague. I must repeat, my friend, that on 3 October the European Council decided that Turkey has no option. There is only one way. Turkey must recognise the Republic of Cyprus, not when a solution is found but now as a condition of its negotiations on the road map to its accession to the EU. Turkey is a guarantor power – listen to this – of the Republic of Cyprus! It may say it does not recognise what it guaranteed in 1960.

I must add that there would be no isolation of Turkish Cypriots but for occupation by Turkey, which it has maintained since 1974. The so-called isolation will cease forthwith and immediately when Turkey withdraws its troops from Cyprus, which it has to do to comply with the judgment of the European Court in Strasbourg. It is not I who says these things; it is the Court in Strasbourg which has called on Turkey to stop violating the European Convention in Cyprus.

I call on my Turkish friends to rethink their policy on Cyprus and to speak not about Turkey but about Europe, as the rest of us do, and defend the European common interest. I call on them to cooperate with the 25 to implement the Berlin plus agreements and not to block those agreements by saying there is a country in the European Union that it does not recognise.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Cebeci.

Mr CEBECI (*Turkey*) – I congratulate the Rapporteur and agree with the recommendations.

I apologise to my colleagues for the fact that this debate has become an exchange between two countries. That did not happen by our choice. To interpret separate clauses of an agreement in accord with one's own opinion does not change the core of those agreements. On 3 October 2005, when accession talks began, we in Turkey knew what we were getting into and the European Union knew what was beginning, too. None of the official documents states that recognition of the government in Cyprus is a precondition or a condition for full membership of the European Union. I remind my colleague and friend from Cyprus of that, and I apologise for taking the Chamber's time to do so.

The PRESIDENT – Thank you, Mr Cebeci.

I call Mr Ates.

Mr ATES (*Turkey*) – I fully agree with the report and its recommendations.

However, after Mr Clerides' speech, I wonder whether Europe is trying to exclude NATO from the European defence system. That would not be logical as it makes no sense. Let me give some figures produced by a research institute, according to which it would cost Europe US\$ 650 billion to have a defence system like the one we have now with NATO's involvement. Are we in a position to invest a vast sum of euros in our defence system? The European economy is not at the level that we would like. Unemployment is increasing in many countries and budget deficits are getting higher and higher. It would be almost impossible for Europe to provide a substitute defence system. We do not have the financial capacity to do it. Europe and NATO should therefore continue to cooperate on a collective defence arrangement that remains as strong as possible.

Simultaneously, the EU is trying to exclude some NATO members from the European defence system, particularly Norway and Turkey, which have been members of NATO for a long time and for

longer than many of the countries that have recently joined. Both countries are not full members of the EU, but that does not give the 25 countries – or any one of them – the right to veto their participation in the European defence system. That makes no sense. Defence is one thing and political issues are another. Political issues can be resolved through other organisations, such as the United Nations, but our defence system is vital to Europe and we must take different steps as necessary.

In the European interest, we must cooperate with NATO and the other side of the Atlantic Ocean until we are capable of developing a new defence arrangement that will satisfy us all.

The PRESIDENT – I call Mr Kucheida, the Rapporteur, to reply to the debate.

Mr KUCHEIDA (*France*) (summary) said that a lot of progress had been made on the Cyprus issue in the last 30 years, and the present tension was not helpful.

Turkish colleagues would need to choose between the EU and NATO. The EU was a military power, but more importantly, it was also a political power. The political union was the aspect that was most important in the eyes of the rest of the world.

When Europe spoke with a single voice it would be heard. It was possible that Europe was not sufficiently respected by certain other countries including the United States and China.

There was never any question of excluding NATO from a European defence system. Some 70% of NATO's military expenditure was currently borne by its European partners. This was why Europe had major prospects for a successful defence system in the future. Europe should continue to lay out a common path to closer defence cooperation.

*(Mr Goris, President of the Assembly, resumed the Chair)*

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Thank you, Mr Kucheida.

Does the Chairman of the Defence Committee wish to speak?

Mr WALTER (*United Kingdom*) – Thank you, Mr President. I just want to congratulate Mr Kucheida on his excellent report and on the way that he dealt with the extensive discussion that we had about paragraph 25 of the report.

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – Thank you, Mr Walter.

The debate is closed.

The Defence Committee has presented, in Document [1918](#), a draft recommendation, to which no amendments have been tabled.

We will now proceed to vote on the draft recommendation contained in Document 1918.

Under Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure, if five or more representatives or substitutes present in the Chamber so desire, the Assembly shall vote by roll-call on a draft recommendation.

Does any member wish to propose a vote by roll-call? ...

That is not the case. We shall vote by show of hands.

*(A vote was taken by show of hands)*

*The draft recommendation is adopted unanimously.*

### ***7. Date, time and orders of the day of the next sitting***

The PRESIDENT (Translation) – That concludes our business for this morning.

I propose that the Assembly hold its next public sitting this afternoon at 15.00, with the following orders of the day:

1. Election of the President of the Assembly for the 52nd Session
2. Address by the President-elect of the Assembly

3. Election of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly for the 52nd Session
4. “Fighting international terrorism: a challenge for Europe” (Presentation of and debate on the report of the Political Committee and vote on the draft recommendation, Doc. [1914](#))

Are there any objections? ...

*The orders of the day of the next sitting are approved.*

Does anyone wish to speak? ...

*The sitting is closed.*

*(The sitting was closed at 12.35)*